2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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and her sons might have been able to exercise all the rights and duties of clanship. There is, in fact, a submerged feeling of rivalry in the relations between the men of the clan and the *pɔyayabəlis*, deprived by an accident of birth of effective jural and ritual membership of the clan. This is shown, for example, in a curious taboo affecting the oldest living *pɔyayabəlɔg* of a maximal lineage. She may never spend a night in the homestead of the head of the maximal lineage, even if he is her own brother. If she did, either or both of them would die. For the lineage ancestors abide in this homestead, and they object to her presence there simultaneously with that of their proper male custodian. The natives, of course, simply state this taboo as a fact, but to anyone familiar with Tale culture the interpretation is obvious. The senior *pɔyayabəlɔg* might, in her own person, have been the head of the lineage but for the accident of birth. Her presence in the homestead which she might have occupied as a man is a hidden challenge and reproach both to the male head of the lineage and to the ancestors. It would be tantamount to a symbolic rejection of the fundamental principles of the lineage organization. For these reasons she cannot stay with the man who most conspicuously represents the extrusion of women from the full heritage of patrilineal descent.

Institutionalized Recognition of a Clanswoman's Status

There are many institutions in which the status of the *pɔyayabəlɔg* as an intrinsic element in the lineage organization is recognized. For example, a new-born child is confined to its father's house for some months. When it is big enough to be allowed out of doors it must be ritually taken out for the first time by a *pɔyayabəlɔg* of the clan. Usually she is a near agnate of the father, but any clanswoman may be asked to carry out the rite. The child's father consults a diviner to find out who will be a suitable *pɔyayabəlɔg*; for the rite is implicitly a blessing of the ancestors, and it is they who are believed to appoint a woman of the clan to carry their blessing to the child. It can be surmised that a *pɔyayabəlɔg* is chosen for this rite because she is by birth identified with the child's father and its lineage, and by sex identified with the child's mother and the function of motherhood. Taking the child out of the house is in part a question of maternal care, therefore a woman's task; it is also a step that involves the child's physical and spiritual well-being. Outside the walls of the homestead lie greater dangers, both material and mystical, than inside the homestead, and this is the concern of the child's patrilineal ancestors.

The role of *pɔyayabəlis* in relation to the lineage *bɔyar* is significant in this connexion. A woman cannot become the custodian of an ancestor shrine, except nominally if she is the sole survivor of a lineage. In that case she cannot sacrifice to the shrine directly, but must call in a collateral male agnate to deputize for the man who might have been the custodian of the shrine. This is the most important distinction between the status of male members and that of female members of the lineage, and it is a consequence of the fact that women do not help to maintain the continuity of the lineage. Nevertheless, *pɔyayabəlis* have the right to take part

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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and watched over by his ancestors. If she or the child dies in childbirth the responsibility falls on her husband. A child should be born under its father's roof, literally into the lineage to which it comes as a profit (*ŋoor*) and a responsibility, and under the auspices of its patrilineal ancestors, the spiritual arbiters of its destiny, to whom it will later in life bring sacrifices. Its life will depend on these ancestors, one of whom will immediately demand to be made its spiritual guardian, charged with preserving its life (*mar u ŋɔvɔr*).

Not only should a child be born under its father's roof, but it should, ideally, be reared, or at least be brought through the first dangerous months of infancy, in its father's house. Circumstances occasionally compel a child to be entrusted to the care of its mother's family, and the Tallensi are practical enough to accept this necessity with equanimity. But they are extremely reluctant to let a young infant pass out of the direct tutelage of its paternal kin and ancestors even for a short while. Thus strong objection is raised if a young wife takes her infant and goes to stay at her parents' house for some time. Here, again, practical necessity may leave no alternative, but there is always a feeling of uneasiness, as can be seen from the following case. When Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ died, his youngest wife went home to her father's house at Tɔŋ-Seug, about a quarter of a mile from her late husband's house, taking her infant of some six months with her. Nindɔyat's brother and prospective heir tried to prevent her going, but she was not well, and they had to admit that she would be better cared for by her mother than by her co-wives. So they allowed her to go. A couple of weeks later, however, the baby fell ill, and though the young mother was staying only a few minutes' walk from her late husband's house, she returned to it immediately. 'She came running back home', her late husband's brother told me, 'because the child was ill. Its (dead) father had not agreed for it to be taken away (that is, the dead father, now a spirit, had mystically caused the child's illness as a sign of his displeasure). And supposing the child were to die at its maternal uncle's house? Should we not say that they had caused the death of our child?' The proper ritual measures to cure the child, without which practical leechcraft could not avail, could only be taken by its father or his representative in its father's house. The young mother believed this as firmly as her late husband's heir.

For all these reasons it is a taboo (*kihɔr*) for a child to be born in its mother's father's house. His ancestor spirits cannot watch over mother and child, for they do not 'own (*so*)' the child. It is, therefore, dangerous for the child's health and chances of survival. Of course, such a thing may, and sometimes does happen by accident. Then the child's father must, whenever he can afford it, erase the pollution by the ceremony of 'removing the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the birth from his father-in-law's house. He sends a sheep and beer to his father-in-law as a placation

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a. A senior wife takes care of her junior co-wives' infants while they are away at the water-hole

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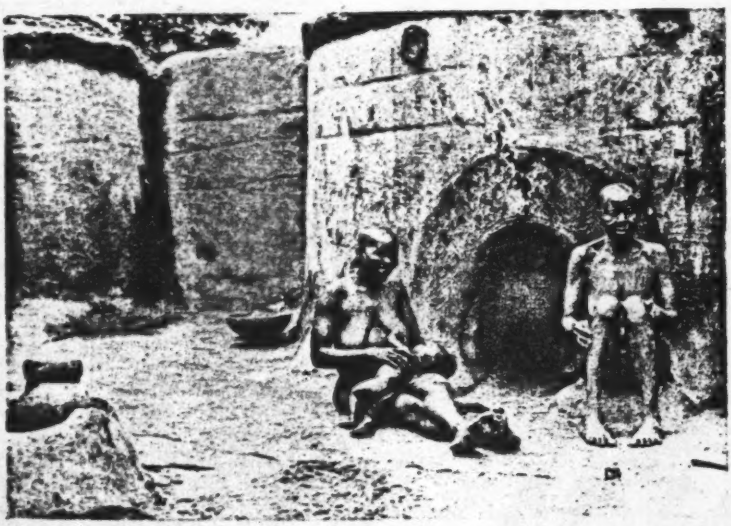

b. A pair of devoted co-wives. The younger woman (with her infant) is about 35, the older about 65, their husband over 70. The older woman has a son of about 45

[facing p.128]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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596 centripetal pull of the *yir* in the economic sphere that the habit of co-operation and mutual help between the women of the household goes deeper as a rule than their inclination to think of their own *dugət* first. Thus there is a great deal of voluntary mutual aid between the women of the household. The things a woman owns she guards jealously; but she will often lend gladly to another woman of the household on the basis of the true reciprocity that prevails in family affairs. A woman who has prepared a new supply of shea butter, for instance, usually gives some to each of the other women of the household, knowing that some day she will receive gifts of a similar kind from them.

596 It is in the children of a family that the balance between *dug* and *yir* is most precisely embodied. They represent both the differentiation of 854 *dug* from *dug* and the synthesis of all the *dugət* in the *yir*, in their most 855 significant aspects. Thus, all the children of a man are formally the children of all his wives, and this might include the children of his brothers too. The women of a family, and especially co-wives, usually help one another a great deal in caring for one another's children. This commences with child-birth. As we have seen, the care of a parturient woman falls largely on her co-wives and other women of the same family. A new-born child is not given the breast at once by its mother but by another nursing mother; and a nursing co-wife would be the first person to be called upon. Later, the infant will often be left in the care of a co-wife for an hour or two or a whole day at a time if its mother has to be away from home. If a woman dies leaving young children, they are reared by her co-wives as a rule. When a girl becomes pregnant for the first time, it is one of her mother's co-wives who has the honour and duty [292] of ceremonially girding her with the matron's perineal band. Co-wives often take pride in and show great devotion to one another's children. This is especially true of a senior wife past the age of child-bearing. Such a woman, identifying herself closely with the husband and being herself no longer engrossed in her own young children, mothers the children of her younger co-wives with zealous devotion.

593 And yet, as the natives constantly repeat, the relation of mother and 736 child is unique. Its mother's co-wife can never be the same to the child as its own mother. A woman cannot have the same feelings towards her co-wife's child as towards her own child. The lot of an orphan, Tallensi say, even in a household full of women, is always a hard one. An orphan never receives the devoted attention and the selfless love which can be given only by its own mother. It has to depend upon the mercy and the sense of duty of women who are its mothers only in name.

602 This is the reason why small children left orphans are sometimes sent 736 to live with their maternal grandmothers until they are big enough to fend for themselves. Some months after his mother's death I met Gundaat, a pathetic little chap of about 9. Talking about various things, we got on to the subject of mothers. Gundaat told me, in a tone of

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the child falls largely on the other women of the household, though the wives of neighbours belonging to the same expanded family, if they are near, might give some help too.[1] The younger women fetch water and cook for her. One of the experienced old women, her mother-in-law or the wife of a neighbour, usually of one of her husband's fellow members of the same inner lineage, supervises and sees to such matters as the bathing of mother and child and the ritual emergence from seclusion of the mother. When she is getting about again, her mother-in-law or senior co-wives must keep a watch over her to see that she does not over-exert herself or go any distance unaccompanied. For as we have mentioned earlier, a woman after childbirth is nervous and may be driven mad by evil trees and stones if she is alone far from home.

These are some of the things a man thinks of when he says that begetting or bearing a child is hard; but they are only the beginning of a father's tribulations. Talking with men immediately after the birth of a child to them, one feels a secret anxiety behind their obvious joy. Many children die in infancy,[2] the Tallensi say, and how can a man know if this particular child will survive? During the first few months of life a child is extremely vulnerable, both physically and mystically. Medicine to keep out evil trees and stones is carefully daubed over the gateway and over every orifice in the homestead wall, and in a circle round the spot where the child lies. *Nɔya teem* ('mouth medicine'), to protect it against malicious praise is given to it. Lucky omens, whether of a conventional or an unconventional kind, are noted. Then, some days after its birth, the child's father or the head of the joint family visits a diviner to find out which of the lineage ancestors is taking it as a spiritual ward (*sɛŋɔraan*) to guard its life (*gur u yɔvɔr*) and watch over its growth. Only after two to six months from the day of its birth is the child at length allowed out of doors; and then it must be ritually carried out, for the first time, by a clanswoman (*pɔyayabəlɛg*) of the father's clan (i.e. by a 'female father', *bapɔk*, of the child) chosen by divination, so that the ancestors may bless this important step in its development. And this is not the end of the story, for a father's responsibilities for his children never come to an end, as we shall see presently.

[1] Among the Tallensi, as among many patrilineal peoples, the parturient woman's sisters do not assist at the birth of the child. For, as the natives say, it is not their child. The responsibility of assisting at the birth falls on the wives of the lineage to which the child belongs—women who will later be recognized as its proxy and classificatory mothers. It is one of these women, too, who suckles the child for the first two or three days until the mother's milk begins to flow properly. A parturient woman's mother and sisters bring her gifts of foodstuffs and firewood; and her father also sends her a gift of foodstuffs, guinea-fowls, salt, and other condiments, according to his means. They have nothing to do with the care of mother and child during and after the confinement.

[2] Infant mortality is high—probably about 150–200 per 1,000. Cf. my paper 'A Note on Fertility among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast', *Sociological Review*, vol. xxxv, nos. 3 and 4, 1943.

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water lowered. Tallensi think it is essential for the health of the mother and babe, and one important item in it is forcing some of the decoction down the babe's throat. Whether or not it actually has a cleansing or invigorating effect must be left to medical judgement. For the native women it has the double significance of an ordeal, and a prescribed treatment that they would not dream of neglecting.

As we have seen, the care of the child on the ritual side falls on its father. The much more exacting physical care of the child in its parlous passage through infancy is its mother's responsibility. This is stressed when Tallensi insist that it is not on account of a magical taboo but because a child is still partly dependent on the breast until it is about three, that sexual intercourse between a man and his nursing wife is discontinued. They say that a child requires the undivided care of its mother until it can run about and eat solid food by itself, and that it will wilt away through lack of nourishment if she conceives prematurely. Nursing mothers become pregnant only too often through lack of self-control, but this is never condoned by public opinion. The only time a Tale woman tries to induce an abortion is when such an accident happens, for no sacrifice is too great to preserve her living child.

When Tale parents are asked what were the special difficulties they had to overcome in rearing their children, they always mention sickness first. Mothers especially have a great dread of sickness in their children. One does not notice this in the easy-going, placid atmosphere of a well-conducted family when there is no 'sleeplessness' (*gogiŋgara*), to use the apt native euphemism for sickness. But one sees it when a child gets ill. Minor ailments throw its mother into a state of anxiety. Serious illness puts her into a panic or prostrates her with grief. She refuses food—which is always regarded by the natives as a sign of severe illness or great emotional distress—and stops all her work. I have seen illness in adolescent or adult children have this effect on women; and the younger the child the more do they suffer.

It is easy to imagine what the death of a child in infancy or childhood means to its mother. A man is expected to control his emotions, but a woman may express her grief freely. A father's grief is palliated, also, by the active role he takes in the ritual by which the emotional shock is neutralized. A woman's part in this ritual is more passive and she feels the blow more acutely in consequence. A mother remains inconsolable for many days and even weeks over the loss of a child.

The way Tallensi think of a mother's grief over the death of her child was brought home to me when Diŋkaha's little girl of about three died after a lingering and horrible illness. He had been devoted to the child and was greatly distressed, but in a few days he had accepted the diviner's verdict philosophically and was his old bouncing self again. His wife, on the other hand, broke down completely. Then, a couple of weeks later, news came that an older child of hers by a former husband, with

CHAPTER VII

THE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

TO complete our analysis of the norms governing the relations of parents and children we must now glance at their development in the course of the child's life. Different themes are dominant at successive periods of the child's physical and social maturation. At first the dominant theme is the love and devotion of the parents; then their authority and responsibility come to the forefront; later the principle of reciprocity emerges as a leading idea; and lastly we see the differentiation and hidden opposition between successive generations on the surface.

Babyhood[1]

Tale babies (*bilie*, pl. *bilies*) are the darlings of the family. Totally naked except for the amulets of their spirit guardians around the neck, they are seldom quite clean. But then, bodily cleanliness is the least of the virtues amongst the Talensi. Though I have seen babies at the sitting stage (about a year old) left alone in a shady spot for an hour or so, it is more usual for them to be in someone's care at all times of the day. Looking after baby is everybody's job—grandparents, older brothers and sisters (boys are as tender as girls with a baby), mother's co-wives, father, and, most important of all, mother.

Up to the time that it is weaned, which occurs towards the end of its third year, a baby (*bilie*) is mainly in its mother's care. For at least the first year it is wholly dependent on the breast for nourishment. It is given the breast whenever it cries or frets or the mother feels inclined to nurse it. Whenever the mother sits down to rest or has

[1] Tallensi distinguish different stages of infancy according to the feeding-habits and level of physical skill reached by the infant. They never count months or years, but a parent is often able to state roughly how many months or years have elapsed since the birth of the child, working it out, most commonly, by reference to harvest and sowing times or to the Great Festivals. A babe in arms is *bilie*; until it is weaned it is described as 'still suckling (*u na mɔyarme*)'. If it is said to be still suckling but 'eating a little porridge (*u diit sayabo biel-biel*)' one can infer that it is at least 2. The unweaned infant's stage of development is further specified by stating whether it is crawling (*u bɔyarme*) or walking (*u kyenme*) or already talking (*u vɔlɔmrɔme*). When the child is weaned it is said to 'have left off milk (*u tuh biihim*)'. Lastly comes the stage, at between 3 and 4 years, when it is said to be old enough to have another immediately following sibling (*u saya nyeer maraga*)—an idea we shall explain in a later chapter. The subject-matter of this chapter is supplemented by my paper, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, cit. supra.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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853 nothing else to do, her babe is at the breast, sucking hungrily or, if it is replete, just playing with the breast with its mouth, its fingers, and its toes. If the mother is away another woman of the household will give the baby medicated water to drink when it cries or will put it to her breast for comfort. It may be any woman of the family, but will usually be a co-wife.

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By the age of 18 months a baby's diet is being regularly supplemented with small lumps of porridge, often pre-masticated by its mother. It is gradually and usually painlessly weaned by increasing its solid food (chiefly porridge), until it is eating the same food as the adults. The only time Tale women have to wean a baby abruptly is if they become pregnant through lack of self-control during the nursing period. Tallensi say that this distresses the baby but that harsh measures are not required as a pregnant woman's milk disgusts a baby. They also say that the premature deprivation of its mother's milk prevents the child from thriving. In fact the premature pregnancy of its mother is probably more of a psychological deprivation for the child than a nutritional loss. By the time a child has its milk teeth and is able to run about, at the age of about 3, it gets no more nourishment from the breast. But its mother's breast is still its chief solace. If it is in pain, or frightened, or just tired and peevish, it cuddles into its mother's arms and clings to her breast for consolation, and a younger baby makes this impossible.

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The completion of weaning marks the first stage in the child's physical and psychological severance from its mother. It has learnt to do without its mother for hours or days at a stretch. It remains contentedly in the care of an elder sister or other member of the household or even its maternal grandmother, as long as it is well and not hungry. It runs about and plays with other children of the homestead and neighbouring homesteads. It can talk fluently and so communicate its wishes to others. And its independence is increased when its mother becomes pregnant again and it can no longer run to the breast for comfort. Its mother is still the centre of its universe—and will remain so for two or three years more, in the case of a boy, and until marriage, for a girl—but the toddler has begun to glimpse the wider social space into which it is growing. Since it began to crawl it has often been told to 'go to your mother (own mother)', 'go to your mother so-and-so (mother's co-wife)', 'go to your grandfather (or grandmother)', 'go to your father (own father)', 'go to your father so-and-so (father's brother)', 'go to Yin, Tee, Baa (a sibling)' by one or other member of the family. Thus it has learnt to divide the people who come into its social space into 'own mother', 'own father', 'other mothers and other fathers' (who take care of it now and then), and 'other children', those whom it plays with, or eats with, or sees about the house. Own parents stand out clearly to the infant—its mother for obvious reasons, its father, as one man put it, 'because she (his little daughter) is often told and because she sleeps with her mother and sees

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PLATE 9

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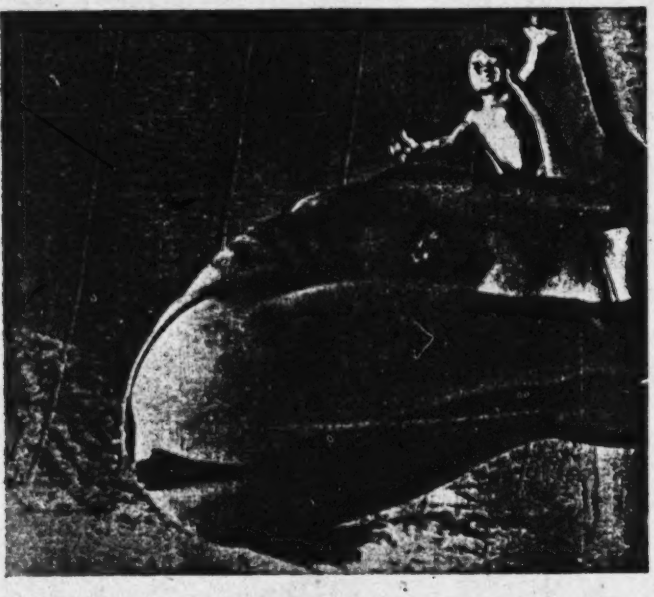

b. The husband's mother and a co-wife of the new mother give her new-born baby its daily bath. The water is so hot that the baby goes rigid with pain

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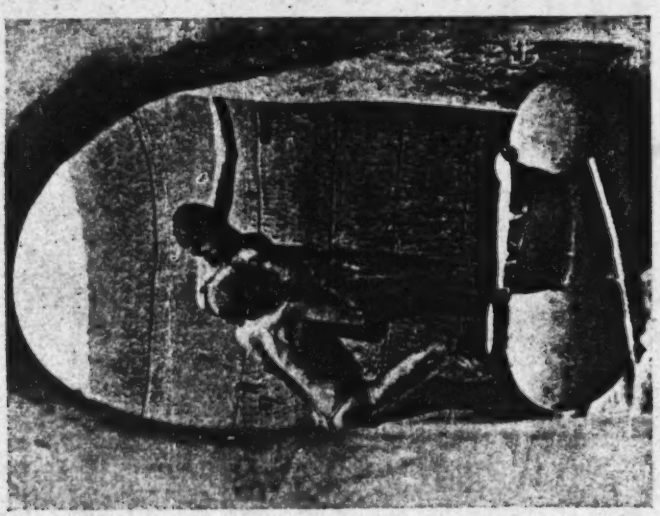

a. The tribulations of motherhood: the daily bath and massage of the mother after childbirth

[facing p. 192]

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had two little daughters, aged about 3, by different wives. One day the two children appeared very proudly each wearing a strip of cotton print about the waist. Omara explained that he had bought them these 'skirts', which had to be exactly the same in size and pattern. Had they been different in colour or size, or had he bought the children different presents, they would have been very upset and their mothers angry. He would have been accused of discriminating between them.

As this instance suggests, the closer children are in age or parentage or both the more should they be treated alike. The limiting case is that of twins and this deserves a special note. Twins (*leeba*)[1] are not greeted with joy among the Tallensi; but they are not destroyed; nor are they regarded as sacred in any circumstances; nor is the mother subject to moral censure or ritual penalties. But no woman desires to bear twins. One of the most efficacious medicines that can be placed in a ground-nut plot or among *ma'ana* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), *bɛt* (*H. sabdariffa*), or *bɛris* (*H. cannabinus*) plants—all of which supply favourite ingredients for sauces[2]—to prevent women from pilfering these crops is the medicine of twins (*leeba ɛeem*) used in purifying the parents of twins. Anyone who defies this charm will have twins, it is said. I have seen women run on catching sight unexpectedly of a twin medicine charm dangling in a farm.

Tallensi believe that twins may not be 'human (*ninvoo*)'—i.e. complete social beings—at birth. As soon as they are born, a man who owns twin medicine is asked for medicine to mark their sleeping-place. If one or both die shortly after birth that is proof positive that he or they are *kɔlkpaaris*, malicious bush sprites, not human beings. They are then buried ignominiously in a special uninhabited place. A twin that survives the first month or so of life is tacitly assumed to be human and treated as an ordinary child. But if it dies in early infancy it may still prove to have been a *kɔlkpaarɔg*, when the cause of its death is sought by divination. Its death will cause great distress to its parents, for it will have been treated with as much affection and devotion as a normal child, but it will not receive normal burial. Only when it reaches the age of about 4 [i.e. is old enough to have a following sibling (*nyeer*)] and is placed under the spiritual guardianship of an ancestor spirit, is a twin definitely regarded as a complete social being.

Tallensi seem to expect, as a matter of course, that at least one of a pair of twins will die in very early infancy.[3] The survivor then has to be

[1] They are always named *Yin* (Heaven) for the older and *Zuur* (tail) for the younger—*Yin*, 'because he sees the light of day first'; *Zuur* 'because he comes last'.

[2] *Vide* previously cited paper 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', by M. and S. L. Fortes.

[3] I can state with absolute certainty that every effort is made to keep twins alive. But the natives assert that the sheer physical strain of nursing and caring for twins is too much for most women. This is highly probable considering that

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ritually 'pegged (*ba'*)'—fastened to life, as it were—and is henceforth regarded as human. But whether either or both of the twins survive, the parents have to undergo a course of ritual purification after their birth. This is believed to act as a magical safeguard against the recurrence of such a misfortune besides cleansing them of the ill luck that has occurred.

In spite of this mystical background, twins that survive are regarded and treated as ordinary human beings. But there is one point on which very great stress is laid. Twins must be treated exactly alike by their parents. 'If you give one a portion of porridge you must give the other an equal portion; if you give one a penny you must give the other a penny', said one informant. If they are brothers, they will live together all their lives. If they are sisters they must be married to the same settlement[1] or to adjacent and interlinked settlements. For it is as if they are one person and yet are two. They are completely equal, completely equivalent siblings; and if they are not so treated, *ba ku nye ɔmma*, things will not turn out well for them.

Rights and duties become important in adulthood, when they are actively claimed and discharged; and it is in the social relations of adults that the equivalence of siblings becomes conspicuous. It is best exemplified in three institutions, the levirate, the rules of inheritance and succession, and the extension of patrilineal, matrilateral, and sororal kinship ties. We have dealt with various aspects of these subjects in preceding chapters. Brief recapitulation with reference to the present context is all that is needed here. The kinship aspect comes up again in the following chapter. But before we look again at the levirate and at the rules of inheritance, it is worth noting some of the minor indications of the equivalence of siblings.

There is, firstly, the idea that the bride-price received for a girl should be earmarked for the payment of the bride-price for the wife of her closest brother. This convention is not strictly upheld, for the deciding

artificial feeding is unknown to the Tallensi. During our stay among them two pairs of twins and a set of triplets (who are treated in exactly the same way as twins) were born to people known personally to my wife and me. Even to a layman's eye it was obvious that the triplets were doomed from the first, both because they were so puny and because the mother was so utterly exhausted. Of the two pairs of twins, only one child survived the first few weeks of life, and this child, when last heard of, did not seem to have a very good chance of reaching childhood. I do not know what the incidence of twin births is among the Tallensi. The best-known owner of twin medicine at Tongo told me he had had five cases during the past two years or so and of these only one child was still alive. I knew only one pair of living twins, aged about 7 or 8, among all the children—easily running into three figures—whom my wife and I got to know throughout Taleland. Single survivors of twins are more common and I knew four. Thus the native view of the high mortality of twins appears to be justified by the facts.

[1] They are, of course, not a pair of successive sisters, so the concept of *nyeer* (*v. supra*, p. 253) does not apply.

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the child is due, her husband sends a sacrifice for her spirit guardian to her father, to secure the blessing of her patrilineal ancestors on the ordeal she is soon to undergo. When the child is born, a messenger is again dispatched to announce its birth to the girl's parents. He is received with the hospitality due to a bearer of particularly glad tidings. Now the girl's mother sends her four new calabashes. These are the infant's toilet-vessels—one for giving the infant its daily medicated water to drink, one as a dipper for use when bathing it, one as a slop basin, one for scooping up its excrement. These private toilet utensils are in part a magical protection for the baby. The occasion is also marked, as we have learnt, by a special gift of foodstuffs to the new mother from her father. All these formalities are not necessary for children after the first; it is enough to send a message on the birth of the child. But the woman's paternal relatives are no less interested in these later children than in her first child.

A child makes the acquaintance of its mother's paternal family very early in life. Its mother's sisters and mother's mother, if she is not too old, are frequent visitors to its mother. Its mother's brothers may be frequent visitors too, especially if they are on friendly terms with its father. But it is not till the child reaches the age of about 5 or 6, when it begins to be taken on visits to its *ahəb yiri*, that it clearly distinguishes these relatives. The person who matters most to a small child at its mother's brother's house is its maternal grandmother (*ma-kpeem*), in whose quarters and under whose care the child lives.[1] Old people, both men and women, love to have their daughters' young children to stay with them, and pet and spoil them quite as much as their sons' children. As will be remembered, grandchildren joke with their maternal grandparents. At harvest time, in particular, old women often have daughters' children to stay for a week or two, so that they can enjoy the good food available at that time. Playing and eating and sleeping with the children of the house, a child learns to regard them as siblings, and partly through imitating them, partly through coming directly under the discipline of his mother's brother, a child thus visiting its *ahəb yiri* learns to think of its *ahəb* as a 'sort of father'. He hears all the gossip of the family. When a domestic sacrifice is performed he is present and receives the portion of the animal—the neck (*naŋgoor*)—prescribed for an *ahəŋ*. I have more than once seen a small boy of perhaps 8 receive the neck of a sacrifice, amid an amused chuckle from his mother's brothers. If a woman dies leaving a young child of less than 5 or 6 years old it is a common thing for the child to be sent to live with its maternal grandmother for a year or two until it is old enough to need only a minimum of maternal care.

Thus, a child learns to think of its *ahəb yiri*, in the strict sense of its mother's brother's homestead, at first, in the more extended sense, later, as a place where it is given food, shelter, affectionate attention, and

[1] This follows directly from the constitution of the joint family.

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827 881 *Naawun*, Heaven, the *ultima ratio* of Tale philosophy, corresponding in this context to our notion of Nature.

812 In keeping with this conception of physical growth, children are *expected* to acquire, in due course, the elementary bodily skills—sitting, 868 crawling, walking, running, hand-eye-mouth co-ordination in eating, 855 and so forth. There is no deliberate training in these skills. Parents 856 and older siblings take an affectionate and attentive, though sporadic, interest in an infant's psycho-physical development, but do not resort to special methods of fostering it. An infant beginning to crawl is allowed to practise more or less at will, watched by mother or sister, brother or father, lest it injure itself. An infant beginning to walk is supported for a bit, now and then, by an older child, or a parent, or any one to whose care it happens to be entrusted. There is no such thing as regular training in these skills. The attention given to an infant in these respects is a function not only of its stage of physiological development, but even more so of the practical exigencies of the situation with which the parent or older child has to cope at the moment. It is quite usual to see incidents such as this: a woman is [313] gathering guinea corn-stalks for her fire some 20–30 yards from the homestead. Her infant son of about 2½ years totters along the path to her calling out *mma, mma* (my mother). She appears to take no [516] notice until he reaches her. He stands beside her, clutching her thigh tightly, while she finishes tying the bundle of guinea corn-stalks. She [482] puts the bundle on her head and, as she wants to get back into the house as quickly as possible, swings the infant—by one arm—up to her hip and marches off. If she were not in a hurry she might walk back slowly, allowing the infant to follow her and throwing back encouraging remarks to him.

868 854 Since nobody thinks infants need special training by particular persons, the natives have a habit of bandying them about from one member of a family to another, though grandparents, co-wives, and other children of the same mother are the most usual nursemaids. A Tale child must, from earliest infancy, learn to co-operate to its fullest capacity with the demands of practical necessity: it must learn to adapt itself to such facts of reality as the economic preoccupations of its mother. I have often seen children of about 12–18 months left sitting in the shade for half an hour or longer, quite alone, while their

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mothers are busy with some household task. A healthy infant will remain sitting thus, almost motionless, playing with a fragment of calabash, a stick, or the sand—for the idea of giving an infant a toy or some attractive trinket to occupy it when it is left alone does not occur to the Tallensi. On the other hand, when an infant clamours for attention there is always some one of its kinsfolk near at hand to render it.

The native point of view about physical growth was well illustrated in the case of two infants belonging to a single extended family which I knew well. The younger infant was a lively, healthy, inquisitive girl of about 2½–3 years old already toddling about and exploring the world. The other infant, a boy about 3 months older, had been puny and ailing from birth and, though obviously intelligent, was chronically fretful and dependent and had not yet begun to walk. In Taleland the number three is symbolical of maleness, four of femaleness. Hence it is said in their folk-lore that boys begin to walk and talk in their third year, girls in their fourth. Yet the glaring discrepancy in development between these two infants caused no anxiety to the parents of the boy, except about his health. They realized clearly the connexion between his retardation and his health, but were entirely complacent about the former. That he would walk and talk in due course was taken for granted.

The expectation of normal behaviour. It will be evident from these examples that in the cultural idiom of the Tallensi age is not conceived as a significant factor in psycho-physical or social development. Yet relative seniority determines status and rights even in children's groups and their notion of time is explicit and clear. They think of genetic development primarily in terms of maturity, which is a synthetic concept embracing both physiological and behavioural signs. Growing up, in other words, is the evolution of one's social personality as it approximates closer and closer to the fully grown, mature adult. Just as this point of view precludes deliberate and standardized methods of training children in the rudimentary bodily skills such as walking, talking, and eye-hand co-ordination in eating, so it would be incompatible with a didactic attitude about bowel and bladder control or about sexual habits and knowledge.

This point of view gives rise to a factor of great importance in Tale education, the *expectation of normal behaviour*. In any given social

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867 857 somnolent, sat whimpering as he ate, while some one else commented that if you want your share of food you must be there to receive it.

183 764 The principle of reciprocity which is thus early learnt in association with siblings and age mates is one of the basic moral axioms of Tale social life. If a man refuses to come to the assistance of a neighbour who has invited a collective hoeing party, the latter will retaliate by refusing assistance to the former at a later date. Often at mortuary ceremonies some one, not obliged by custom to do so, will bring an animal to be slaughtered for the dead, 'because when my father died, he brought a sheep to be killed'. A girl of about 10, after her grandmother's funeral, showed me how half her head had been shaved in the customary way. But her spontaneous explanation was: 'Because, at the feast, when they cook the beans they give me a whole dish to myself.' This moral aspect of Tale social relations, as we can now see, explains the rights which increasing economic skill confer upon a boy or a girl. Those who work for you *deserve* their keep.[1]

[854 855] [1] I have not attempted to track the Tale attitudes towards authority and justice to their roots in infant psychology, as would be necessary for an exhaustive analysis. Some of the phenomena which should be observed in this connexion are not accessible to study by the behaviouristic methods of the field worker. But it may be worth mentioning that one can readily observe the constraint and force which, at some times, the affection and indulgence which, at others, are expressed in the way parents treat their infant children. From the day of its birth an infant is subjected to the agonizing ordeal of a daily bath in steaming medicated water which is so hot that it becomes rigid with pain on the first douche. One sees infants of a few days to about 12 months old arbitrarily held down on their mother's laps while medicated drinking water is forcibly poured down their throats as they struggle and splutter. A few minutes after an infant has been treated thus roughly it will be lovingly suckled, fondled, and caressed by mother or sister, or affectionately dandled by its father. [866] A 3-year-old suddenly frightened runs to its father, or more characteristically to its mother to bury its face between her knees, clutching her thighs, or to snatch at the breast. The same 3-year-old, in a fit of temper, will nag, whimper petulantly, strike its mother with its little fists. No one beats an infant for this. The mother tries to soothe it, or patiently calls some one—husband or co-wife—to come and take charge of the unruly child. This indulgence extends to the excretory processes, and to masturbation, which is overt until puberty in boys. [839] Until it is weaned, at about 3—when it can walk—it has very complete possession of its mother. After weaning, which is generally mild, the child becomes more detached from its mother, who now resumes regular intercourse with her husband. At this age, or even younger, children are often playfully threatened by their fathers. 'I will slaughter you if you do so and so', but they always seem to react with complete equanimity to this. Yet a boy of 4–5 years, suspiciously

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Like ourselves, the Tallensi recognize that some observances are merely matters of convention, others are matters of conscience, and a great many have elements of both. Their emphasis, however, differs conspicuously from ours. For example, the notion of cruelty to animals as delinquent or reprehensible would never occur to them. Small boys often catch mice or birds and keep them, tied with a strip of strong grass, to play with for days and eventually kill and eat them. It is, indeed, a crude form of nature study, for they learn a great deal about the habits, the anatomy, and physiology of the animals and birds they ostensibly maltreat in this way. They are never checked, and the suggestion that this was bad (the Tallensi have no expression, as far as I am aware, for our notion of cruelty) was received with amused laughter. It is a natural interest of children and not a moral problem; and it does not produce a general attitude of cruelty to animals. Both children and adults often show great affection for domestic dogs, for example.

Many rules of conduct are observed 'because it is befitting' (*de narəmi*)—or because non-conformity is 'unbecoming' (*de pu narəmi*)—i.e. it rouses embarrassment or ridicule or public criticism. Thus when greeting a superior, a man must sit with legs flat, crossed at the calves, bare-headed, eyes lowered, whereas a woman must crouch on all fours or sit with thighs close together and legs tucked under the buttocks. This latter posture in women is a matter of modesty. Up to about 9 or 10 years of age a little girl can sit in any way, legs spread out if she wishes, although from babyhood she has learnt to sit with legs tucked under. As she approaches puberty she will often be admonished 'sit properly' if she does not sit decorously. It is unbecoming for women to eat the domestic fowl, and I have often heard little girls of 9 or 10 boast that they are already refraining from it. A woman goes naked until she is advanced in her first pregnancy.

eyeing me from the security of his mother's lap, was heard to say that he was afraid I might cut off his penis. The Tale infant, in short, appears to be permitted to gratify all its wish impulses without restraint; yet it must do so in a social world over which it has no control, in which it is a weak dependant. Here, I think, still speaking in terms of superficial psychology, is the germ of the later domination of respect for authority in the child's moral development. It seems probable, from these observations, that the deeper psychology of the process is not unlike that which has been recorded by students of our own children, such as Dr. S. Isaacs.